

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for retrieving and presenting data from a target system, comprising:
 - receiving target system information from the target system;
 - retrieving a set of object description files corresponding to the target system information;
 - sending to a client a set of objects supported based on the set of object description files retrieved;
 - receiving a selected object from the client;
 - selecting one of the set of object description files corresponding to the selected object;
 - retrieving one of a set of data retrieval programs corresponding to the target system information;
 - retrieving object data about the selected object using the retrieved one of the set of data retrieval programs;
 - decoding the object data about the user selected object using the selected one of the set of object description files corresponding to the selected object to form decoded object data; and
 - sending the decoded object data and a presentation format to the client allowing the client to be data driven.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the target system information includes a processor type of the target system and an operating system type of the target system.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the set of object description files is a set of XML

object description files and the set of data retrieval programs is a set of Gopher programs.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein retrieving the set of object description files corresponding to the target system information includes retrieving the set of XML object description files corresponding to the operating system type of the target system.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein retrieving the set of object description files corresponding to the target system information includes retrieving a set of user-defined XML object description files corresponding to the operating system type of the target system.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the selected object is received from the client using an application programming interface.

7. The method of claim 5 wherein retrieving one of the set of data retrieval programs corresponding to the target system information includes retrieving one of the set of Gopher programs corresponding to the processor type of the target system.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein retrieving the object data about the selected object includes passing the retrieved one of the set of Gopher programs through a target interface to retrieve the object data for the selected object from the target system.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the client is an object browser.

10. The method of claim 3 wherein the set of XML object description files is stored in an XML object database and the set of Gopher programs is stored in the XML object database.

11. The method of claim 2 wherein the set of object description files is a set of XML object description files and the set of data retrieval programs is a set of data extraction routines.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein accessing the object database to retrieve one of a set of data retrieval programs corresponding to the target system information includes accessing the object description module to retrieve one of the set of data extraction routines corresponding to the processor type of the target system.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein retrieving the object data about the selected object includes passing the retrieved one of the set of data extraction routines through a target interface to retrieve the object data for the selected object from the target system.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the set of XML object description files is stored in an object description module and the set of data retrieval programs is stored in the object description module.

15. A development system, comprising:
- a client;
 - an object database including a set of object description files and a set of data retrieval programs, the set of object description files including at least one object description file corresponding to an object selected by the client, the set of data retrieval programs including at least one data retrieval program corresponding to the target system;
 - an object interface coupled to the client and the object database to retrieve object data from an object in the target system using the at least one data retrieval program corresponding to the target system, and providing the object data to the client based on the at least one object description file corresponding to the object selected by the client;
 - and
 - a target interface coupled to the object interface to enable connection of the object interface to the target system.
16. The development system of claim 15 wherein the object interface obtains target system information from the target system, the target system information including a processor type of the target system and an operating system type of the target system.
17. The development system of claim 15 wherein the coupling between the client and the object interface includes an application programming interface.
18. The development system of claim 15 wherein the client is an object browser.

19. The development system of claim 15 wherein the object database is an XML object database and the set of object description files are a set of XML object description files and the set of data retrieval programs are a set of Gopher programs.

20. The development system of claim 19 further comprising a user-defined XML object database coupled to the object interface and including a set of user-defined XML object description files corresponding to a set of user-defined objects.

21. The development system of claim 20 wherein the object interface retrieves the set of XML object description files corresponding to the operating system type of the target system and the set of user-defined XML object description files corresponding to the operating system type of the target system.

22. The development system of claim 21 wherein the client enumerates a set of objects supported using the set of XML object description files and the set of user-defined XML object description files.

23. The development system of claim 22 wherein the object interface receives the object selected by the client.

24. The development system of claim 23 wherein the object interface retrieves a particular one of the set of XML object description files corresponding to the object selected by the client and retrieves a particular one of the set of Gopher programs

corresponding to the processor type of the target system.

25. The development system of claim 24 wherein the object interface retrieves the object data from the object in the target system by sending the retrieved one of the set of Gopher programs through the target interface into the target system.

26. The development system of claim 25 wherein the object data is decoded using the retrieved one of the set of XML object description files to form decoded object data.

27. The development system of claim 26 wherein the decoded object data and a presentation format is sent to the client allowing the client to be data driven.

28. The development system of claim 16 wherein the object database is an object description module and the set of object description files in the object database are a set of XML object description files and the set of data retrieval programs in the object database are a set of data extraction routines.

29. The development system of claim 28 wherein the object interface retrieves a particular one of the set of data extraction routines corresponding to the processor type of the target system.

30. The development system of claim 29 wherein the object interface retrieves the object data from the object in the target system by passing the retrieved one of the set of

data extraction routines through the target interface into the target system.

31. A method for retrieving and presenting data from a target system, comprising:

retrieving object data from the target system for an object selected by a client, the retrieval performed by using one of the set of data retrieval programs corresponding to the target system; and

providing the object data and a presentation format to the client, the object data and the presentation format based upon one of a set of object description files corresponding to the object selected by the client.

32. The method of claim 31 wherein retrieving the object data includes receiving target system information from the target system.

33. The method of claim 32 wherein retrieving the object data includes retrieving a set of object description files corresponding to the target system information.

34. The method of claim 33 wherein retrieving the object data includes sending to the client a set of objects supported, the set of objects supported based on the set of object description files retrieved.

35. A device comprising:
- a medium; and
 - a set of instructions recorded on the medium;
- wherein the set of instructions, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:
- receive target system information from the target system;
 - retrieve a set of object description files corresponding to the target system information;
 - send to a client a set of objects supported based on the set of object description files retrieved;
 - receive a selected object from the client;
 - select one of the set of object description files corresponding to the selected object;
 - retrieve one of a set of data retrieval programs corresponding to the target system information;
 - retrieve object data about the selected object using the retrieved one of the set of data retrieval programs;
 - decode the object data about the user selected object using the selected one of the set of object description files corresponding to the selected object to form decoded object data; and
 - send the decoded object data and a presentation format to the client allowing the client to be data driven.